

BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION UPPER THAMES BRANCH

Purple Emperor (*A. iris*) Report for 2012

Dennis Dell



Photo © Steve Croxford



Photo © Peter Law

Acknowledgements

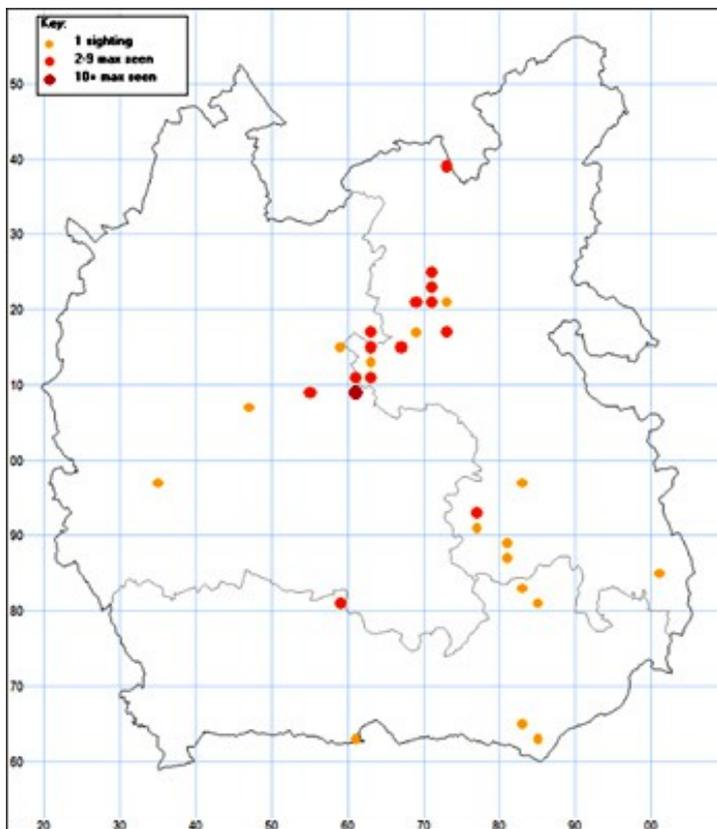
Thank you all once again for sending me your sightings. The Appendix indicates the recorders, not all members, who contributed to this report. I often don't receive all sightings directly, so I am indebted, as usual, to those of you who have passed on observations of third parties.

1. Introduction

The details of the individual observations are in the Appendix and the difficulty of recording numbers of individuals is still with us, so that the numbers given here can only be used as an approximation, but is still useful for comparing trends from year to year.

2. Summary

- The sightings, at **266 (31 2km squares)**, were second only to the bumper year of 2010 (393).
- 12 new habitats were found.
- The poor weather delayed the flight season by about 2 weeks. The first observations were on July 8th [a fleeting sighting was made on July 4th, but none from July 5th till July 7th]. Sightings were recorded well into August, with the last on August 17th.



A. iris distribution 2012 (data from Levana)

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Weather 2012

March: The UK mean temperature was 2.3 °C above the 1981-2010 average, ranking 3rd warmest in a series since 1910 and the warmest March since 1957. As well as the dryness, the period 23rd-30th was remarkably sunny across virtually the whole of the UK.

April: The weather was generally unsettled with numerous showery days. There was some snow in northern areas early in the month and longer spells of rain especially in the last week. The UK mean temperature was 0.6 °C below the 1971-2000 average, and it was the coldest April since 1989. Unusually, April was colder than March (the last time that occurred was in 1998) and the temperature failed to reach 20°C anywhere (this last occurred in April 1989). Most of England, Wales and eastern Scotland were much wetter than normal.

May: The first three weeks were dominated by cool and, at times, unsettled conditions - continuing the wet theme of much of April. A marked improvement occurred from 21st, with a much warmer and more settled spell. Temperatures rose above 27 °C at least somewhere in the UK each day from the 23rd to the 28th. The UK mean temperature was 0.5 °C above the 1971-2000 average, the very warm spell towards the end of the month offsetting the earlier cool conditions.

June: The weather was dominated by low pressure over or close to the UK, with associated weather fronts. These brought rather cool days, some very large rainfall totals and also some strong winds early in the month. There was an almost complete absence of warm, settled spells. The UK mean temperature was 0.3 °C below the 1971-2000 average and it was the coolest June since 1991.

July: The weather was again characterized by low pressure, with associated weather fronts, bringing rather cool, cloudy conditions and some high rainfall totals in the first half of the month. England and Wales enjoyed a much warmer, settled week from the 21st. The UK mean temperature was 1.0 °C below the 1981-2010 average and it was the coolest July since 2000.

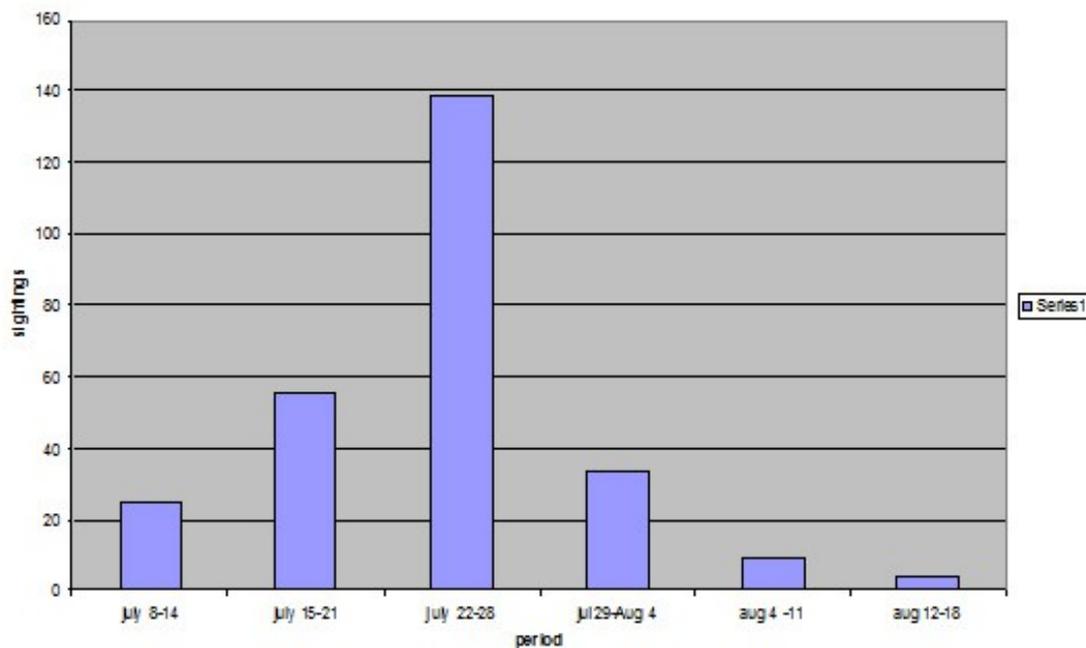
August: The weather was mainly influenced by low pressure over or to the west of the UK, bringing cloudy conditions and showers or longer periods of rain on many days especially in the west and north. The south-east of England saw the driest and warmest weather. The UK mean temperature was 0.4 °C above the 1981-2010 average.

After the extraordinarily high temperatures in March, what followed was a poor spring and summer with lower than average temperatures and above average rainfall.

3.2 Sightings

It is interesting to note that the weather-affected, delayed, flight season did not result in a decrease in numbers, this being the second best year since 2004. Also, the length of the flight season, almost 6 weeks, was normal.

The chart shows clearly that the peak was reached during the last week in July, about 2 weeks later than average.



3.3 Territories [male assembly areas]

- **Oakley Wood car park**
This does not appear, any longer, to be a distinct territory. During the height of the season, individuals were observed all along the main track from Oakley Wood car park to Shabbington Turning Circle, with little activity around the tree tops.
- **Piddington Wood**
The south east corner of the wood is an established territory, with many observations recorded here.
- **Little Wood**
This is probably our best territory and has produced good displays of males clashing for some years now. This is also a south-east facing edge, at the top of a steep slope.
- **Finemere Wood**
No obvious territorial behaviour this year.

- **Greatsea Wood**
Most tree top activity occurred around the The Ashes and Poplars just north of the big ride between Romer and Greatsea Woods. This is not the highest point in these woods.
- **Rushbeds Wood**
A few sightings above the ashes at the edge of the wood bordering Lapland Farm meadows are made most years, but it is not really a high point, simply a spot offering good views into the canopy.
- **Waterperry Wood**
Recent years have seen males congregating around a group of trees a few hundred yards from the northern edge, where two tracks meet. This is not a high point, and it is not obvious why this spot is so popular, except that there are several big Sallows.

3.4 'New' habitats

Twelve new habitats were found in 2012. Many of these are close to known sites:

- **Crowthorne Berks, private garden:**
This is not far from Swinley Forest which is a known habitat, or Wildmoor Heath BBOWT reserve where a sighting was made for the first time.
- **The Holies, near Streatley:**
This wood borders on to the Goring and Streatley Golf Course from where we have records for the past few years.
- **Moor Wood, near Frieth:**
This is close to Moor Common, a known habitat.
- **Private wood in mid Bucks:**
This was to be expected because *iris* is seen in the other woods on this estate.
- **Waddesdon Manor:**
Two were seen here on the same day, several hours apart. This is interesting, because this is mainly parkland.
- **Another small private wood in mid Bucks:**
This one is not far from Rushbeds Wood, a known habitat.
- **Buckland Warren Oxfordshire:**
This wood is a long way from any known habitat. Very interesting discovery: the first from west Oxfordshire.
- **Decoy Heath BBOWT reserve:**
Not far from known woodland habitats in west Berks.
- **Wildmoor Heath BBOWT reserve, east Berks:**
Also close to woods where *iris* has been seen.
- **Wall of Pub in Skirmett:**
No known habitat close by, although surrounded by large woods.
- **Maidenhead Thicket, Berks.**
- **Temple golf Club, not far from Maidenhead Thicket.**

3.5 Habitat Changes

There were significant tree felling programmes one year ago in some woods (Finemere and Chinkwell). The thinning of Sallows in some parts of Oakley Wood does not seem to have affected the population; this was done in a sympathetic manner, i.e. where there was a dense line of Sallows along a ride, only every other tree was cut down. In Finemere Wood too, most of the important old Sallows lining the main track have been left alone, apart from some trimming of the lower branches.

In Finemere Wood, tree felling along one spot about 200m south of the turning circle has created a 'new edge' consisting of Corsican Pines: males were seen using these trees for perching and display. It is possible that these pines had always been used for assembly, but, before the felling, they were hidden from view.

4. Comments and plans

This has been the latest season since we started to keep detailed records [2003] and was almost certainly due to the atrocious weather during the late larval development and pupal stages [April and May].

Interestingly, the very late emergence did not affect numbers: it was the second best season in fact.

The continued discovery of new habitats is very gratifying and is indicative of the health of this species in our region, as well as of the enthusiasm of our observers.

We will continue to try to extend our records for the Chilterns.

Dennis Dell

December 2012

APPENDIX: Details of A. Iris Sightings in the UTB area during 2012

(Red denotes a new habitat)

DATE	OBSERVER	LOCATION grid reference	MICRO-LOCATION ^b grid reference	NUMBER SEEN AND SEX ^c	TIME ^d	WEATHER CONDITIONS	BEHAVIOUR ^e and comments
4.7	Wendy Campbell & Dennis Dell	Naphill Common	SU8349397002	1		Just after heavy rain, brief sunny spells	Circling high up in Birches before flying across ride to Oak. Same area where the Campbells discovered iris in 2011
8.7	Wendy & Mick Campbell	Little Wood	SP62451577	4M	15.30 to 17.00	Ideal/moderate	<p>Main territory at top of wood. Several spiralling battle flights and a number of extended gliding displays over the ashes and silver birches.</p> <p>Later, in cloudy conditions, we were again treated to a number of extended battling flights over the ash trees further down the slope.</p>
9.7	Mick Campbell & Dennis Dell	Little Wood	SP62451577	2	14.40 to 15.00	No sun, about 18 degrees, no wind	<p>Three short bursts of activity around main Ash territory from 2 individuals.. From 3.00 to 3.30 all was quiet.</p> <p>We then explored the lower parts of the wood without seeing anything. Back at the top at 4.20 Mick saw one come up from an Ash very briefly to 'intercept' a bird as it flew past.</p>
10.7	Mick & Wendy Campbell	Stanton Little Wood	<p>Two at SP59028-11240 (both males)</p> <p>One at SP58942-11176 at 3.10pm (possible female).</p>	3 [2M]	14.00 to 15.30	Moderate/ideal	We stood at what we consider to be the main territory and at 2.38pm a single Iris made its appearance with two short flights. At 3.05pm a second individual appeared and we watched an extended aerial chase between the two Iris. We then moved further along the wood edge and had a brief sighting of a third individual. It seemed to come from lower down the oak tree, flying up and plunging into the canopy.

11.7	Bob Ellisdon	Shabbington Wood	SP613113	1M	14.30 to 14.45	Sunny intervals between dark clouds; 18 degrees, little wind	The insect was on the ground in bright sunshine drinking water left by the storm that had passed by 10-15 minutes earlier. It crawled up my finger and perched on the knuckle where it stayed for the next 15 minutes.
11.7	Chris & Pat Dennis	Bernwood	Main ride near car park	1M	11.10 am	Hazy sun	On the ground
11.7	Chris & Pat Dennis	Bernwood	Main ride bend before meadow	1M	11.26 am	Hazy sun	On the ground
11.7	Chris & Pat Dennis	Bernwood	Main ride bend before meadow	1M	2.20 pm	Hazy sun	On the ground
11.7	Steve Croxford	Little Wood	SP62451577	3	pm	sunny	When I arrived there was a very large flock of Jackdaws inhabiting the large Ash and Oaks at the top of the wood. I was worried that these may have driven off the emperors. I should not have been concerned, within minutes of the Jackdaws leaving the emperors arrived. In 10 minutes I saw 5 brief flights over the Ash and Silver Birch. I think there were at least three individual <i>iris</i> all probably males. One of these flights included a pair chasing and fighting with each other.
11.7	Wendy & Mick Campbell	Waterperry	SP60848-09875. This is about 200m from northern end where path splits	2	16.00	Sun and rain	One seen flying across the track above our heads. We've seen several at this location in the past (6 from memory) Within a couple of minutes we saw a second individual and watched it fly up to the top of one of the Poplars where it perched with wings closed. The other individual reappeared and flew near it briefly and then flew off into the distance.
12.7	Peter Law & Adam Hartley	Oakley Wood	Main track by log stacks	1M	10:15 – 11:30	Intermittent sun	Patrolling area around log stacks then feeding on dog faeces
12.7	Richard Soulsby	Oakley Wood	SP613113	1	~12:00	Warm, sunny	Flying low over ride occasionally settling briefly.

12.7	Richard Soulsby	Shabbington Wood	SP628107	1M + 1 other	~11:00	Warm, sunny	Settled for several minutes on ride surface with proboscis probing gravel. Another one seen flying low over ride.
12.7	Mick Campbell	Rushbeds Wood	SP672155	1	12.05 and 12.15	ideal	Looking up through the canopy of trees - a circle of large oaks, ashes, tall poplars and willows - saw one <i>iris</i> gliding around an ash for a good 10-15 seconds at 12.05pm. About 10 minutes later, still in the same place, I saw it again and this time it perched on another ash tree.
12.7	Oliver Cooper	Oakley Wood	Main track [piccadily]	1			
14.7	Oliver Cooper	Oakley Wood	Main track [piccadily]	1			
15.7	Oliver Cooper	Oakley Wood	Main track [piccadily]	1			
15.7	Gerry Kendall	Shabbington Wood	SP612113 Piccadilly circus	1M			Circling then landing on tack
15.7	Colin Williams	Shabbington Wood	In dip of main track by open area	1M	11		It was on the side of the main ride, feasting on dog muck, next to the meadows in the dip below the first crossroads and stacks of timber. Five others enjoyed the show with me, two of whom had already been watching it for 10 mins before I arrived. It eventually drifted off and disappeared amongst some tall oaks nearby.
15.7	Steve Croxford	Finemere Wood	SP71882176	1M	10.30	sunny	A large male had taken up residence in the new coppice area at the top of the main track shortly before you reach the turning circle. It made frequent gliding flights around the clearing settling either on the trunks of the pine trees or on the piles of cut logs. I watched it for the best part of half an hour between 10.30am and 11am.
15.7	Jonathan Wright	Shabbington Wood	Near turning circle	2			2 flying around oak tree at east end of main ride
15.7	Chris & Pat Dennis	Bernwood	Main ride 100mts past seat	1M	11.25 am	Bright sun	Landed for 2 mins

17.7	Malcolm Brownsword	Homefield Wood	SU81008675 On main ride immediately before the T junction where the turn to the right is up a steep slope	1M	11.10	20 degrees, 40% sun, breezy	Flew onto top of an 8 ft. high pile of logs, settled 10 secs then flew off; returned 10 minutes later but did not settle
17.7	Dave Wilton, Steve Croxford, Dennis Dell	Finemere Wood	New cleared area just below turning circle [see Steve Croxford, 15.7]	3	14.50 to 15.05	Sunny, breezy, 21 degrees	They were flying around, and settling on, the Corsican pines at the back of this new clearing. Will be interesting to see if this is a new territory.. Steve also had another very brief view of an <i>iris</i> further down the track. It was gliding over one of the large Oaks on the edge of the large clearing that is now getting very overgrown. [SP72012166]
17.7	Oliver Smart	Oakley and Shabbington	SP612116 SP613113 SP622109 SP627106	5			2 males in the main car park at 612116 1 male feeding on poo at 613113 1 male on the ground briefly at 622109 1 (poss. 2) male(s) at turning circle
17.7	Peter Law & Sheila Harlow	Oakley Wood	Main track just past log stacks	2M	15:30 – 16:50	Intermittent sun, becoming overcast	First feeding on dog faeces throughout period. Second settled briefly on ride surface when first was initially located
17.7	Richard Soulsby	Oakley Wood	Car park, SP612117	1M + 1 other	09:45 – 12:15	Warm, sunny	Settled on car, then flew up into hazel tree, returned to settle on van, proboscis licking the paint. A photographer said it had only just flown off when we returned at ~12:30. Another one seen briefly flying nearby.
17.7	Richard Soulsby	Oakley Wood	SP613113	1	10:30	Warm, sunny	Flying low over ride occasionally settling briefly.

17.7	Oliver Cooper	Shabbington, Oakley		4			
17.7	Oliver Cooper	Oakley Wood	Main track [piccadily]	1			
18.7	Mick Campbell	Rushbeds Wood	SP6615	3	16.45 to 18.00		At about 5.00pm reached the iris ash tree territory on the edge of the wood near the Laplands meadow gate and stood watching the top of the ash trees. After about 10 minutes saw two battling males above the canopy. One landed and the other flew off to the left. A couple of minutes later saw two battling males about 70 yards to the left. Much activity followed in both sets of trees up to 6.00pm, ending in one of the males flying down into the meadow and landing on a small hazel tree, about 7 feet off the ground. Only 3 individuals flying at the same time; there may well have been a fourth individual there.
19.7	Dave Wilton	Boarstall Wood	SP63551326	1M	14.05 to 14.15	Sunny, strong S-W breeze	Most of my time was spent looking unsuccessfully at the usual trees, closer to the cottage, which were being thrashed around in the wind. When I moved back to the car (parked at the western end of Span Green) I saw the activity in the rather more sheltered trees immediately opposite.
19.7	Oliver Cooper	Oakley Wood	Main track [piccadily]	1			
19.7	Wendy & Mick Campbell, Dennis Dell	Romer Wood	SP713232	3		The weather was very overcast for almost our entire visit and quite cool (about 17-18C) but not very windy	We stood at the "Poplar Tree" territory which is where we've had our best sightings of iris previously in this wood. We had sightings of two iris in the tops of the trees, but only very short flights. One landed in a large ash on the right side of the territory and the second in the top of a Poplar to the left of the territory. There ensued an aerial clash between one of the Emperors and several of the Hairstreaks [almost certainly Purple]. After about 30 seconds iris gave up the

							battle and returned to a Poplar. Our next sighting of iris was of one flying towards us above the track, our third individual. It headed towards the ash tree, circled and then flew back across the track and disappeared behind a large oak.
20.7	Wendy & Mick Campbell	Piddington and Little Woods	Piddington Wood meadow SP6215 Little Wood	4 3	16.00 to 16.45 17.00 to 18.00	Sunny/cloudy, 19 degrees	Piddington Wood Meadow 3 males flying/battling over oaks and 1 female flying in top of willow Little Wood 3 x PE, 2 in main ash tree territory and 1 half way down main ride flying over oaks, 5.00-6.00pm SP6316.
21.7	Martin Phipps	Oakley Wood		2M 4F	am	Mainly sunny	I had 6 sightings of PE's, (2 on transect) 2 Males and 4 Females. It would seem that they have taken a shine to the log stacks, on section 1 and 2 of Oakley walk.
21.7	Peter Law	Shabbington Wood	Main track just past cross roads	1M	pm	Intermittent sun	Settled on ride surface then flew up into trees
21.7	Wendy & Mick Campbell	Penley Wood	SU764938	2	13.00 to 16.00	Sunny at the beginning	Weather was sunny for a short period when we reached the main ride and then clouded over. After 10 minutes (still sunny) we saw one iris fly up from the canopy to chase off a bird, promptly followed by a second.
21.7	Nick Bowles and Dennis Dell	Private wood in mid Bucks	Various places along main rides	5	13.00 to 15.00	50% sun, 19 degrees, light breeze	Activity across the rides in the middle of the wood; no obvious territorial behaviour; rather 'oak edging' males searching for females
21.7	Richard Potter	Crowthorne Berks	Garden at SU837654	1F	am		Female purple emperor in garden at RG45 6US Crowthorne Berks this morning which was watched in the rare warm

							<p>sunshine at close range for a few minutes.</p> <p>This particular specimen was fairly worn and would have appeared to have been on the wing through the recent unpleasant weather.</p> <p>This is close to the large forest between Bracknell and Camberley</p>
22.7	Unknown, reported by Maureen Cross	Common Wood, The Holies	SU590803	3			<p>The first 2 sightings were probably on the same day 22nd July and were around the same area SU 590803 the third was not far away (date unknown) and the person who saw it said he had already reported it. This is quite close to the golf course where sightings had been made in previous years</p>
22.7	Nick Board	Private wood in north bucks	Along bridleway at eastern edge	3M 1F			
22.7	Wendy & Mick Campbell	Moor Wood	SU815899	1F	15.30		<p>After finding some extremely good sallow there earlier this year, we spent a couple of hours searching for possible territories and then returned to the sallows which border a muddy track/ride. At 3.30pm a large butterfly with distinctive white markings flew at low level along the track towards us, eventually settling on a muddy area where it stopped for a short time - a large and pristine female iris! She flew off into the sallow. She perched there for a while then flew around the sallow then off back down the ride, did a u-turn and came back to the puddle. She then flew off down the ride again.</p>
22.7	Andy Hoskins	SP 610116 Oakley Wood	All on Main track: 1x 1 st X-road in the path; 1x path that follows the stream to Meadows; 4 on/around cleared area at highest point of main track, 50 yds on from the open wooded 'mini	6M	10.30-11.30	Bright Sun, still, hot	<p>1st was by the stream; it flew above the path for a short while then landed and crawled to some dog faeces where it stayed for some time before flying off following the edge of the woods over the stream towards Bernwood Meadows. Nos. 2,3,4 &5 were flying and intermittently</p>

			meadow' where the main track turns left				settling on the gravel by the log piles in the cleared area. Two also went up into lower branches (7-8ft) of oaks by the path and settled for a while. There were around 8 people gathered after a few minutes, and the PEs settled quite close. No.6 was settled on a pile of faeces on the 1 st crossing in the main track just down from the car park. It stayed here for some time before flying up the cross track between the oaks.
22.7	Tony Croft	Oakley Wood	See behaviour	5	11.05 to 12.20	Sunny, 22 degrees	1xPE on dog poo SP 612112 1xPE on dog poo SP 614111 2xPE one on the ground, one flying low SP 616111 1xPE flying low SP 612113
22.7	Michael and Diane Hunt	Private wood in mid bucks		2F			
22.7	Unknown visitor	Whitecross Green Wood	Car park SP599149	1			
22.7	Oliver Cooper	Oakley Wood	Main track [piccadily]	8			
23.7	Dennis Dell	Finemere Wood	Main track, half way up	1M	11.55 to 13.20	Sunny, 24 degrees	On muddy patch, stayed for at least 45 minutes. On this day, many seen in Bernwood but only one in Finemere
23.7	Mark Roberts	Finemere Wood	Finemere Hill house	1M			Mark lives in the house. He found an almost dead male on his window sill. He placed it outside on a stone; one week later it was still there, but minus its body!
23.7	Wendy & Mick Campbell	Sydblings [Wicks] Copse	2 M at SP554094 1 F at SP553095	3	13.00 to 15.00	sunny	We saw 3 iris, 2 from the far end of the meadow above the Ash tree territory where we've seen them before, one of which flew 'in' from the fen direction, interacted very briefly with the other individual, turned round and headed back over the fen, flying really high, probably at

							<p>least 300' in the air. We watched it go way off into the distance until it disappeared from view.</p> <p>Our third sighting was in the 'extension' area. We were watching over the top of a huge area of willows when a large iris, probable female, flew up from the willows and disappeared behind some small oak trees.</p>
23.7	Steve Croxford	Shabbington	Piccadilly circus SP61611114	2	pm	Sunny and warm	Oak edging
23.7	Steve Croxford	Piddington Wood	SP63001629	1		Sunny and warm	In meadow corner territory, gliding over large Ash .
23.7	Steve Croxford	Little Wood	2 at SP62431575 1 at SP62461579	3		Sunny and warm	2 on territory on large Ash 1 on territory on Silver Birch
23.7	Oliver Cooper	Bernwood	SP6119011581	1M	10.28	18 sunny	On track, flew, circled then landed on another watchers boot
23.7	Oliver Cooper	Bernwood	SP6126611006	2M	10.34 to 10.38	18 sunny	One flying, settled on willow, then on track, joined by 2 nd male on track
23.7	Oliver Cooper	Bernwood	SP6126611006	2	10.45	18 sunny	Flying along track
23.7	Oliver Cooper	Bernwood	SP6131811264	1M	10.48	18 sunny	On track
23.7	Oliver Cooper	Bernwood	SP6226110860	1M	11.19	18 sunny	On track
23.7	Oliver Cooper	Bernwood	SP6227210863	1F?	11.25	sunny	On track, pristine condition, no purple visible, larger. Flew into Oak 1 metre off ground then away before I could confirm it as female.
23.7	Becky Woodell	Whitecross Green Wood	Car park	1	am	sunny	PE flew across the car park and into the tall oaks on the edge.
23.7	Oliver Cooper	Bernwood	SP6227210863	1M	12.08 to 12.17	22 sunny	On track, then flying up and down track

							0.3 m off ground, on track, then more track skimming flight before leaving. Distance covered 100m.
24.7	Trevor Hussey	Naphill Common	SU83559704	1F	15.00	sunny	Flying level, strongly and straight at approx. 2 m high. In small meadow near The Clumps (approx. 60m from oak where PEs were seen in 2011)
24.7	Jonathan Crouch	Shabbington Wood, Bernwood Forest	from car park to just beyond the clearing on the right where the ride begins to rise.	5M	First seen at 10:00 Last seen at 12:30	V.hot & sunny	2 on the ground; 2 on the long piles; 1 on lower branches of an Oak overhanging one of the log piles. The 5 were fairly evenly spaced from the log pile nearest the car park to ride just beyond the first clearing on the right.
24.7	Paul Huckle	Oakley Wood, Shabbington Wood	Various places along main track and in Yorks Wood	5	11.15 to 13.53	ideal	1) 11:15am Just before the stream on main ride SP 61321 11264 Male who circled down to track and feed on earthy bit of track near grassy edge 2) 11:20am Just after the stream on main ride SP 61450 11201 Male who flew over track 3) 1:31pm About 50m east of Point 2 SP 61414 10895 Probably a female (very large) flying across track 4) 1:40pm Piccadilly Circis SP 61608 11147 Male feeding on ground, followed by brief feeding alongside puddle in track 5) 1:53pm - Exactly the same details as sighting 2!
24.7	Steve Croxford	Finemere Wood	SP71872178	1	9.50	Sunny and warm	Oak edging

24.7	Steve Croxford	Romer Wood	See observations; along and above main track	4		Sunny and warm	<p>Down at the junction of the track and the wide ride I saw a male <i>iris</i> Oak edging before it disappeared over the trees in the direction of the Aspen territory by the stream.</p> <p>Making my way back to the main track I found a female <i>iris</i> egg laying on one of the Sallow just before the track. Then another/same one 'struck' into one of the large Sallows by the road. After a wait of about 20 minutes another female arrived and also 'struck' the next Sallow along. After appearing to lay a couple of eggs she moved lower to lay another egg. I don't know if this was three different females or just the same one looping around, for the records I have put it down as 3.</p> <p>1 at SP71352316 Oak edging male</p> <p>1 at SP71342312 Egg laying female</p> <p>2 at SP71372315 Egg laying females</p>
24.7	Tony Croft	Rushbeds Wood	North-south ride	2		Sunny, 23 degrees	<p>As I was walking along the north-south ride an Emperor flashed past me at head height and disappeared from view. A little further along just before the ride closes in I saw one flying above medium scrub to my left about 20 feet above the ground.</p> <p>SP667155 and SP666157</p>
24.7	Chris & Pat Dennis	Bernwood	Main ride 20m before stream	1M	2.34 pm	Short sunny spell	On the ground 5 mins
24.7	Matthew Dodds	Finemere Wood	Along main track SP718217	2			2 PE on main ride at ground level. Also at Finemere house above the wood I was shown a dead PE that had come into the house the day before. This was on the 23 rd of July.

24.7	D Ferguson	Black Park	E-W ride at S edge of Strawberry wood by bench at TQ013845	1f		Sunny, hot	Flying around willow
24.7	Oliver Cooper	Oakley Wood		3			
25.7	Julia Huggins	Oakley Wood	SP609111	1M	11.00		swooped out of the trees and landed briefly on the damp and muddy footpath
25.7	Dennis Dell	Private wood in mid-Bucks		2	15.30 to 16.45	Hot, 28 degrees, mainly sunny	Female in big Willow at 16.20; landed in several places before flying off across ride; at 16.40, buzzed by male at same spot as it flew low across ride
25.7	Steve Croxford	Rushbeds Wood	Between SP 66631576 and SP66691558	6, 3M 3F	9.30 to 10.30	Sunny and hot	In the stretch on the main track between the entrance to Lapland meadows and about half way down to the main cross roads I saw 6 iris in an hour. The first was a male Willow edging high up in the canopy. However the next five sightings were all either mud puddling, flying very low along the ride or on vegetation very low down along the ride. They were a mix of 3 females and 2 males. The pick of the sightings was a female that circled me twice before briefly settling upon my jeans. She then flew up into an Willow where I lost her for about 30 seconds before picking her up again in a neighbouring Willow. She appeared to lay an egg before disappearing into the wood.
25.7	Steve Croxford	Greatsea and Romer Woods	SP713231	8, 7M 1F	From about 11 am	Sunny and hot	All the action appeared to be at the junction of the track and the wide ride. So I spent much of my time just waiting in the shade for iris to come to me. Between about 11.00am and 12.30pm I saw 8 sightings. The first seven all appeared to be males hunting for females. The last sighting was a female egg laying in the large Willow next to the track that was also being used yesterday. These sightings were all of iris heading in different directions and with several minutes between each sighting. While they may have been the same individual each time I think that is very unlikely. However I would not like to

							hazard a guess as to how many individuals were seen.
25.7	Graham Taylor	Oxfordshire private wood		1M	11:50	Hot and sunny	Flushed from puddle; flew to low branch, then WNW along track when disturbed.
25.7	Steve Croxford	Waddesdon Manor	See behaviour	2M		Sunny and warm	SP73661652 8.30am On ground Weather: Sunny and warm. SP73521685 to SP73301704 3pm Flying slowly just above ground level
25.7	D Ferguson	Black Park	70m W of 24.7 black park sighting	1f		Sunny, hot	Flew to oak and settled 20ft up
25.7	Oliver Cooper	Waterperry Wood	SP60850990	1	17.57		the large Sallow with dead growth at top; 1 flying down from high then along track towards wood entrance, height 3m, probably male.
25.7	Oliver Cooper	Oakley Wood		3			
26.7	Wendy & Mick Campbell	Waterperry Wood	1 at SP60848 09875, 3 in main ride, SP60807 09796, 1 female, 2 males 2 in main ride southern end, SP60381 09008, , 2 males 3 in main ride, SP60569 09085,, 1 female in sallows, 2 in a slow chase 1 in main ride, SP60653 09327, 1 probable male oak edging 1 x PE main ride, SP60749 09630,, female in sallow.	11	12.40 to 15.45		We had good views of one iris flying around sallow near Dell's Corner, then about 150 yards further down the track we had one female and two males. We saw the female go in the North/NE side of a sallow where she disappeared into the sallow. The two males flew around the sallow almost hovering, presumably looking for the female, but failed to find her and both flew off in a N-E direction. We then walked right down to the end of the main ride, carrying on round where it bears right, without any further sightings. We sat and watched the large sallows and conifers where we've seen iris previously and we believe this is another territory. After 10 minutes we saw 2 iris chasing at the top of the conifers. Just off the track we walked into the wood behind the sallow to view it from the other side and

							<p>were pleased to see several more very large sallows. We had another two sightings of iris in the canopy above us but decided it was one of the two males we had seen chasing.</p> <p>In other areas of the wood we saw 5 more individuals, 2 in Sallows which appeared to be egg-laying females and 3 others.</p>
26.7	Steve Croxford and Dennis Dell	Romer Wood	SP712233 to SP713231 and SP712229	5 or 6	11.00 to 14.00		Main activity around junction of big grassy ride and main track, as Steve saw yesterday. Male skimming low and settling on faeces for a long time; seen again 30 min later there; flight into big Aspen; one flying high across middle of greatsea/romer ride; two flying across Ashes in dip near main crossroads
26.7	Wendy & Mick Campbell	Bernwood	SP6118411592 near car park	1M	10.40		
			SP6116310528 york wood meadow manure patch	1M	12.00		
26.7	Steve Croxford	Private wood in mid-Bucks		1F	16.30	Sunny and hot	Flying slowly around Oak and Sallows.
26.7	Oliver Cooper	Oakley Wood		3			
27.7	Steve Croxford	Oakley Wood	SP61541117	1M		Weak sun but warm	SP61541117 Oak edging
		Waterperry Wood	SP60981003 to SP60800978	12 sightings, possibly 6 individuals			<p>Waterperry Wood Dell's Corner SP60981003 to SP60800978</p> <p>10 x PE eggs Waterperry Wood SP60880990, found on branches which had been cut down.</p>
27.7	Oliver Cooper	Oakley Wood		1			
27.7	Martin Phipps	Bernwood	Oakley Wood and	3	2 to 4pm		One flying in the trees at the end of

			Shabbington Wood				section 4 of Oakley, at about 2.30, could not be sure of sex. Then 1 male in section 2 of Oakley on animal faeces. In Shabbington section 8, just after where the trees have been cut back a female PE was settled on the Sallow, that must have been about 3.55 pm.
28.7	Rob Ryan	Buckland Warren, Oxon	SU340961, public footpath	1	pm	Low 20s Celsius, Sunny	Flew from the direction of larches and oaks, circled me about the knees and landed on a nearby muddy patch of the ride, where I watched it for several minutes
28.7	Paul Rainsden [reported by Jim Asher]	Streatley		1	am		male PE on Goring and Streatley golf course (13th tee) at 11.30. It was about 400-500 yards from where it had been seen a couple of years ago, and not far from The Holies sightings this year [see 22.7]
28.7	Wendy & Mick Campbell	Homefield Wood	SU809487378	1		Warm, cloudy	1.00pm at top of wood - brief sighting - flying over conifer.
28.7	Mick Campbell	Waterperry Wood	SP608098	1		sunny	near Dell's Corner SP608-098, male flying up & down centre of main ride. 5.00pm.
29.7	Wendy & Mick Campbell	Waterperry Wood	SP608098	3		Cloudy, sunny, rainy spells, warm	5 sightings of at least 2 x PE (1 male & 1 pristine female) near Dell's Corner SP608-098, 11.30am & 12.30pm. The female iris was flying/landing in sallows but didn't appear to lay any eggs (perhaps not mated yet?). A male flew around the sallow very close to the female but didn't find her. The other 3 iris sightings were around the same area so we couldn't be sure if they were the same individuals or not. 1 x PE egg.

29.7	David Redhead	Bernwood	SP63081063 [F] SP614112 [M]	2	F at 11.50, M at 12.45	mixed	<p>I was close to the M40 when something large flew across the top of a gap in the mainly oak tree canopy; it returned and alighted on one of the oaks. I got the binocs on it which made it a certain Purple Emperor and probably a female. It was arranged at rather a funny angle pointing downwards towards half past four with wings half closed. It then re-arranged itself upright and fully opened its wings in the sun when it became a huge female. After a few seconds it flew off again.</p> <p>Walking down the main drag towards the car park you pass a couple of small ashes on the right just before the stream. Yesterday the larger one produced a male Purple Emperor which flew across the transect route just within 5 metres height and it was being chased by a large dragonfly (Southern Hawker?).</p>
30.7	Wendy and Mick Campbell, Dennis Dell	Little and Piddington Woods	SP6316 SP629161 SP6215	1M, 1F 1 3M	2 to 4 pm	Rain followed by sun	<p>Corner of Piddington meadow and in the oak tree territory: single male gliding around the area at 2.20pm. Soon joined by a female, flying from the nearby Ash into a big Sallow where she posed for about a minute before flying off over the tree tops into the interior of the wood.</p> <p>We headed off along the footpath and in the middle of Piddington Wood we paused to check the old Vista, now obscured by a young Ash tree in the foreground. From big Ash, iris flew out on a short 3-second flight, looping back into the Ash and disappearing.</p> <p>At Little Wood territory: at 3.10pm, a single male made frequent flights lasting several seconds or more and landing at two or three favoured points at the top of the Ash. Ten minutes later a second male joined the show and a spectacular high speed aerial display ensued. The two males tussled on and off for seven minutes, using all their best moves to try and secure the prime territory, spiralling up round and round each other high into</p>

							<p>the sky, sometimes very close to one another almost making contact at times and at other times flying in big loops around the territory, occasionally splitting off into opposite directions to race back to the prime perch, only to meet each other and start all over again.</p> <p>At 3.46pm a the third iris joined the show and a dog fight between all three ensued. This went on for some minutes until two iris were seen chasing each other into the distance leaving the victor with the prime territory. After watching him perform a few victory circuits we left him on his throne.</p>
30.7	Phillipa Sheldrake	Decoy Heath BBOWT reserve SU614635	Near car park	1F	2pm	Sunny intervals	Came in and landed on sallow briefly, flew off and came landed again briefly then flew off towards Nature Reserve
30.7	David Redhead	Bernwood	SP611116 near car park SP611103 SP610110	1F 2M		16 degrees, sunny intervals	<p>Arrived at Bernwood at 10.15. Spent 15 minutes in first section of main drag at 16C and mainly sunny. Towards the end a female Purple Emperor came long the top of the sallows on the opposite side of the ride from the dog poo bin and settled at the top of one when it appeared to be basking rather than laying eggs . So 1 Empress at SP611116 at 10.30am.</p> <p>I recorded the two males on transect. Heading towards Hell Coppice one took flight from an oak and appeared to land in the neighbouring silver birch. Then in the ride by the entrance to Bernwood Meadows one came over my head from behind and flew over the top of an oak and disappeared. So 1 Emperor at SP611103 about 11am and 1 Emperor at SP610110 about 11.45am.</p>
30.7	Mike Turton [reported by Colin Williams]	Wildmoor Heath BBOWT reserve	SU846629	1F			On ground, fairly worn

1.8	Alan Gudge	Skirmett	SU775902 wall of public house ['the Frog']	1			<p>PE was seen on the wall of the Frog PH at Skirmett</p> <p>This is at grid reference SU775902 and would be about 300 metres east of the large wood which comprises Great Wood, Combe Wood and Poynatts Wood as shown on the OS map. I do not know whether this wood contains much willow. It is privately owned but there are some footpaths running through parts of it and I will try to take a look sometime at the tree species. The woodland (Adams and Goddards) is further away on the other side (east) of the valley and is much better known to us. There is not a lot of willow in it.</p>
1.8	Mick Campbell and Tony Croft	Rushbeds Wood	SP6615	1F	15.00	mixed	In Sallow
2.8	Dave Wilton	Finemere Wood	SP718217	1M	12.50 to 13.00		male PE actively intercepting insects and birds around the Corsican Pine territory along the main ride.
2.8	Wendy & Mick Campbell	Piddington & Little Woods	SP6316 SP6215	1F, 4M 2M	13.55 to 15.20	Warm, sunny intervals, heavy showers	<p>5 x PE SP6316, 1xF and 4xM, Piddington Wood Meadow Corner, activity at 1.55pm for 10 minutes.</p> <p>2 x PE SP6215, 2xM, Little Wood Ash territory, clashing & perching at 3.20pm.</p>
3.8	Steve Croxford	Private wood in mid Bucks		2F	11.30 to 12.30	Sunny intervals	Circled me on main track before flying into wood. 2 nd appearing to lay on several Sallows.
3.8	Mick Campbell & Dennis Dell	Piddington & Little Woods	SP6316 SP6215	1F, 2M 2M		Cloudy with sunny spells	<p>3 x PE SP6316, 1xF and 2xM in Piddington Meadow Territory [now called 'Oates corner' because he was the 1st to discover activity here].</p> <p>2 x PE SP6215, 2xM, Little Wood Ash territory, clashes, flights around territory and several aerial battles with lots of perching in between, from 4.30 to 5.05pm.</p>

							Then back at Piddington 'Oates corner' 2 PE at 5.30pm, assumed to be the same 2 males seen earlier.
6.8	Mick Campbell	Piddington Wood	SP6316	1	14.00 to 14.45	Sunny intervals and cloud	In Piddington Meadow 'Oates corner' Territory, between 2.00 and 2.45pm. 4 sightings of the same individual - a male flying over a big Ash tree.
6.8	David Cleal	Homefield Wood	SU8187	1			flying at a height of about 30 ft and looked quite large , it came towards me along the edge of the tall conifers in the pheasant pen then flew over my head. However it appeared again and flew lower over a small oak at the woodland edge.
8.8	Wendy and Mick Campbell	Boarstall Wood	SP635134	1F	16.40	sunny	Flying slowly, high up between large fir trees (cupressus I think) in the garden of the house
9.8	Reported by Matthew Oates	Maidenhead Thicket	SU8516581629	1F			An NT staff member saw a female on an oak sap run at 5.30pm at Maidenhead Common
10.8	Dave Wilton	Private wood in mid bucks		1F	15.00		large female seen first at head height
10.8	Mick Campbell	Little Wood	See behaviour	3		Hot & sunny	3 in usual Ash tree territory at Little Wood SP6215.
10.8	Julia Huggins	Whitecross Green Wood	SP590150 car park	1	13.30	Hot & sunny	One individual seen, presumably female as it was flitting along the top of the hedge row and investigating Sallow trees.
12.8	Wendy & Mick Campbell	Little Wood	See behaviour	2M	15.55 to 17.00	Few sunny spells	2 x PE (males) in usual Ash tree territory at Little Wood SP6215. Cloudy with a few sunny spells. 1 PE was very active & looked very fresh through binoculars. Between 3.55pm and 5.00pm it made regular flights around its territory, perching on the smaller ash trees between flights. At one point it chased after a bird.

14.8	Mick Campbell & John Woolmer	Little Wood	See behaviour	1M			1 x PE (male) in usual Ash tree territory at Little Wood SP6215. Very active, flying over territory. Weather okay, sunny spells
17.8	Malcolm Peake	See behaviour	SU837830	1			Details observed at Temple Golf Club, adjoining Mungden Wood and about 3/4 mile from Maidenhead Thicket. Purple Emperor female beside Pro's shop, I think taking minerals seeping from a rubbish container on a warm a sunny day.